

**Minutes of DDS Board Meeting  
March 8, 2006  
Conyers Headquarters**

**Present**

Trummie Patrick  
Billy Fortson  
Patrick McGahan  
Doug Chalmers  
Linda Evans

**Not in Attendance**

Kelly Gay, Chairman  
David Hanna  
Ben Porter  
Susan Gordy

Also present was Joseph Drolet and Kay Baker of the Attorney General's Office.

Trummie Patrick, Vice Chairman officiated the meeting calling it to order at 9:05 a.m. and at which time a quorum was established.

**Introduction of New Board Member - Linda Evans**

Mr. Patrick introduced and welcomed Ms. Linda Evans, the new DDS Board member appointed by Speaker Richardson, is replacing Hugh Hardison who resigned. He briefly reviewed Ms. Evans' biographical information. Ms. Evans stated that she is delighted to be appointed and looks forward to working with the agency and Board.

Chairman Patrick asked Kay Baker to introduce Joseph Drolet who is replacing Chris Brasher as the Section Leader at the Attorney General's Office. Ms. Baker stated that Mr. Drolet has been in practice in the Atlanta area for 20-30 years and comes to the AG's office with a great amount of experience including legislation issues which will be very helpful.

**Approval of Minutes from February 8 Board Meeting**

After review of the minutes from the February 8, 2006 meeting, Vice Chairman Patrick asked for a motion. Patrick McGahan motioned to approve the minutes as submitted; Doug Chalmers seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members. A copy is attached as a permanent record to these minutes.

## **Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Dozier stated that his comments would be brief to allow ample time for review of the numerous rule changes and waivers on the agenda. He promised more detailed performance figures for the Customer Service Centers (CSCs) as well as other areas would be provided at the April meeting; however, he wanted to share that for three consecutive months the CSCs are serving 92% of customers within a 30 minute period. He feels this is an outstanding accomplishment and commends the examiners on their efforts to improve customer service.

Customer Service - Mr. Dozier reminded the Board of the state's customer service slogan "faster, friendlier, and easier" which he spoke of at the February meeting. He stated that the agency focused on those three elements when presenting the budget request to the Governor. DDS has partnered with Joe Doyle of the Governor's Office of Customer Service, who will focus on assisting the DDS call center in becoming the model state-of-the-art call center for all state agencies. Also, Georgia Tech will once again partner with DDS to assist the driver's license records section to see if any rapid improvements in their process can be identified.

Commissioner Dozier informed the Board of the unfortunate incident at the Covington CSC where a man, while taking the road test, died from a heart attack causing the car to hit a tree slightly injuring the examiner. He wanted to acknowledge the staff of that CSC and commend them all for their dedication to the agency by continuing to do their job and provide excellent customer service under those unfortunate circumstances.

Mr. Dozier stated that DDS opened a new Cordele office on February 16. The Department of Corrections work crew renovated an old State Patrol post making DDS a very nice, adequate facility. Also, after a long five year process, with Ben Porter's help, an agreement has been finalized with the City of Macon for a new center at the old terminal station in the downtown area. Upon completion of renovations (6-8 mos.), the City will allow DDS to use it free of charge and will also provide 90 parking places and an area to use for the driving range.

In accordance with HB 501, as of March 1, the responsibility for handicap parking placards has been transferred to the Department of Revenue (DOR) and will be issued by the county tag offices. Also, all of the GRATIS database and servers have now been transitioned over to DOR. DDS still partners with DOR on use of warehouse space but they soon intent to move out. The only other aspect of the transition that has not occurred is the Accident Reporting Unit, which was transferred to the Department of Transportation (DOT), is still located in the DDS building across the street from headquarters. Eventually they will move but he feels that arrangement will be more long term.

HQ Process Improvement Update – Mr. Dozier reminded the Board of the review and organizational chart presented them a few months ago on how the efficiency of the headquarters drivers license operation could be improved. He stated this process has begun by first focusing on the entering of citations and eliminating the six months it currently takes to get it entered onto the record. A new validation team has been created and has already greatly increased performance over the last two weeks. He hopes to be able to eliminate the backlog of citations within the next few months..

Legislative Overview – Commissioner Dozier stated the agency itself has only two bills, which are basically just for clean-up purposes. One specifically relates to Commercial Drivers Licenses

(CDL) and it is to clarify the language and add definitions and penalties, things that are already being done; however, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) felt it should be included in the code section. Both of these non-controversial bills passed the House and been sent to the Senate. However, due to FMCSA audit recommendations, an amendment is needed on the CDL bill to allow for programming changes to be made to keep DDS in compliance with FMCSA. Also, an amendment will be added giving authority to DDS to issue a CDL-HAZMAT driver a 90-day extension allowing Homeland Security - Threat Security Assessment time to complete the background check on the driver. He concluded by saying there are also several other bills being tracked that would inevitably impact the agency.

2007 Budget – Cathy Malone gave a review of the final House Appropriations Committee version of the 2007 Budget which within a few days would go to the floor for a vote. She stated that overall the budget process is going well and everything DDS asked for - positions, pay raises and other efficiencies, remain in the bill; but in addition, the Appropriations Subcommittee added \$700,000 for a facility in Blue Ridge and \$200,000 to renovate the facility in Athens, neither of which was in the agency's budget request. However, the \$100,000 requested for the Motorcycle Safety Program was cut out entirely. Commission Dozier stated he felt the House would pass the budget presented by the Committee; however it still must go through the Senate who will do their version and in the last 2-3 days of the session, the sub-committees would go into conference to work out the different issues between the two committees.

Next Board Meeting – In conclusion of his presentation, Commissioner Dozier stated the next Board meeting is scheduled for April 12 when he plans to present the Board with a detailed agency performance review. He also hopes to review the final draft of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for procurement of a new drivers license system.

## **Review and Approval of Initial and Final Rules Changes**

Rules for Initial Adoption – Jennifer Ammons, DDS General Counsel, reviewed all proposed rule changes for initial adoption. A copy of the proposed rule changes are attached as a permanent record to these minutes.

**Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program (ADAP)** – Ms. Ammons, reminded the Board that this is the course given to high school students to help them understand the consequences of driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to replace existing regulation in light of changes in the governing statutes made by HB 501, enacted at the 2005 session of the General Assembly, which created the Department of Driver Services and transferred the responsibility for administration of the law relating to the issuance of driver's license and administration of ADAP from the Department of Public Safety. She added there is very little substantive change other than to add clarification in specific areas. .

**Limousine / Chauffeur Permits** - Ms. Ammons stated the purpose of the proposed amendment is to enact a new regulation in light of changes in the governing statute made by HB 501, enacted at the 2005 session of the General Assembly, which created the Department of Driver Services and transferred the responsibility for administration of the law relating to the issuance of chauffeur permits from the Public Service Commission to DDS.

Upon conclusion of the review, Ms. Ammons asked for the Board's favorable consideration of these proposed initial rule changes. Vice Chairman Patrick called for a motion. Billy Fortson

motioned to approve the changes as presented; Patrick McGahan seconded with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Rules for Final Adoption – Jennifer Ammons reviewed all proposed rule changes for final adoption. A copy of these rules changes for final adoption are attached as a permanent record to these minutes.

Ms. Ammons reminded the Board that these rules received their initial approval at the January meeting. The purpose of the proposed rule changes is to modify an existing regulation in light of changes in the governing statutes made by HB 510, enacted at the 2005 session of the General Assembly, which created the Department of Driver Services and transferred the responsibility for administration of the law relating to the issuance of driver's license to DDS. It also reflects administrative organization of the divisions of the new agency. She stated that a public hearing was scheduled; however there were no attendees or comments submitted.

Upon conclusion, Ms. Ammons asked the Board's favorable consideration of these rules changes for final adoption. Vice Chairman Patrick called for a motion. Billy Fortson so motioned; Linda Evans seconded with unanimous approval from the remaining Board members.

## **Petitions for Waiver of Agency Rules**

Jennifer Ammons stated there are three petitions for waiver of rules to be presented for Board consideration. A copy of each petition is attached as a permanent record to these minutes.

Patricia Harless - Ms. Ammons reminded the Board that several months ago, Ms. Harless presented a petition which they denied due to lack of supporting documentation to prove her common-law marriage existed prior to the repeal of Georgia's law that eliminated common-law marriages. Ms. Harless, through her attorney, has resubmitted her petition with a number of supplemental documents dating back to the early 1980's, which is well before the repeal of the common-law marriage statute. Vice Chairman Patrick asked if legally DDS was comfortable with the evidence provided in these documents on which the board can base its decision. Ms. Ammons responded that the documents submitted with the second petition provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the legal requirements. Vice Chairman Patrick called for a motion. Doug Chalmers motioned to approve the waiver as presented; Patrick McGahan seconded with unanimous approval by the remaining board members.

Steve Cission for Morgan County High School – Morgan County High School conducts a Drivers Education Program and has submitted a petition for two separate waivers of the Administrative Rule. The first is a waiver from the regulation that defines the content of the driver education program that would allow them to use their driving range as a portion of the on the road training. Typically a driver education course is devised of 30 hours class room and 6 hours of behind the wheel. They are requesting a waiver to allow 4 hours on their driving range and 2 hours of behind the wheel training with an instructor in the car. The range would simulate roadway driving with the instructor in a tower who could communicate via radio with the student. She stated this is essentially the same waiver request that the Board approved for DeKalb County Schools to use their driving range. The second part of the waiver is they want to exceed the maximum number of students allowed for the classroom portion of the program. The regulation limits a single instructor to 40 students; however, they want to increase that amount to 55-60 students. Ms. Ammons stated that DDS Regulatory Compliance feels this number well

exceeds the established Board of Education student-teacher ratio and would affect the quality of the instruction. As such, DDS recommends that the Board approve the first part of the petition but deny the second part. Vice Chairman Patrick asked for a motion. Patrick McGahan motioned to approve the first part of the waiver but deny the second part; Doug Chalmers seconded with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

Risk Reduction & Defensive Driving School, Inc. – Lonny Dykema – This is another Drivers Education provider who is requesting to use a 1998 Toyota Camry with 150,000 miles for drivers' education training. Since this vehicle is eight years old, they are requesting a waiver from the rule which limits the life of a driver education training vehicle to seven years. Ms. Ammons stated that in this situation DDS has security concerns. Even though Mr. Dykema states in the petition that the vehicle recently had a break job, timing belt and new tires; as a car ages, especially given the excessive mileage on the vehicle, you risk the chance of major mechanical failure. A student driver is the last person you want behind a wheel if that happened. She concluded by saying based on this reasoning, DDS recommends this petition be denied. Vice Chairman Patrick called for a motion. Linda Evans motioned to deny the waiver; Patrick McGahan seconded with unanimous approval by the remaining Board members.

## **Adjournment**

Mr. Patrick stated that upon adjournment of the Board meeting there would be an Executive Session. Patrick McGahan motioned to adjourn the Board meeting; Billy Fortson seconded with unanimous approval by the remaining board members.

Respectfully submitted,

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William D. Fortson, Jr., Secretary